

Message Text

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PAGE 01 STATE 097942
ORIGIN NEA-10

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INFO AMCONSUL BOMBAY

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: SOPN, TECH, IN

SUBJECT: BALTIMORE SUN ARTICLE ON REPROCESSING OF NUCLEAR
FUEL IN INDIA

1. FOLLOWING ARTICLE APPEARED IN BALTIMORE SUN, SUNDAY,
APRIL 16: BEGIN TEXT -- NEW DELHI (REUTER) - INDIA HAS
STARTED TO REPROCESS SPENT NUCLEAR FUEL AT ITS NEWLY BUILT
REPROCESSING PLANT AT TARAPUR, NEAR BOMBAY, THE DEPARTMENT
OF ATOMIC ENERGY SAID. THE DEPARTMENT'S 1977-1978 ANNUAL
REPORT SAID THE PROCESS WAS BEING USED TO EXTRACT PLUTONIUM,
USED IN FAST BREEDER REACTORS. PLUTONIUM IS ALSO AN INGRED-
IENT IN NUCLEAR WEAPONS. THE REPORT DID NOT MAKE CLEAR
WHERE THE SPENT FUEL CAME FROM. INDIA HAS TWO NUCLEAR
PLANTS IN OPERATION, ONE BUILT WITH CANADIAN ASSISTANCE
IN RANA PRATAP SAGAR IN THE NORTHERN DESERT STATE OF RAJ-
ASTHAN AND THE OTHER BUILT BY THE UNITED STATES AT TARAPUR.
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PAGE 02 STATE 097942

THE UNITED STATES HAS REFUSED INDIA PERMISSION TO PROCESS
SPENT FUEL FROM THE TARAPUR PLANT. DIFFERENCES EXIST BE-
TWEEN THE TWO COUNTRIES OVER SAFEGUARDS AS A RESULT OF
AMERICAN FEARS OF NUCLEAR PROLIFERATION. CANADA HAS DECIDED
ONLY RECENTLY TO REVIVE NUCLEAR CO-OPERATION WITH INDIA
AFTER STOPPING ITS ASSISTANCE PROGRAM WHEN INDIA EXPLODED
AN ATOMIC DEVICE IN 1974. INDIA HAS REFUSED TO SIGN THE

NUCLEAR NONPROLIFERATION TREATY AS LONG AS THE UNITED STATES, BRITAIN AND THE SOVIET UNION CONTINUE TO DEVELOP ATOMIC WEAPONS. AT A COMMONWEALTH CONFERENCE IN AUSTRIA IN FEBRUARY, PRIME MINISTER MORARJI R. DESAI CALLED FOR AN END TO THE TESTING OF NUCLEAR WEAPONS AND SAID HIS COUNTRY WOULD NOT MAKE SUCH DEVICES. "WE ARE NOT MAKING WEAPONS FROM NUCLEAR WASTE, AND WE WON'T MAKE WEAPONS," HE SAID. THE ATOMIC ENERGY DEPARTMENT'S REPORT SAID THAT, BECUASE OF THE U.S. REFUSAL TO ALLOW INDIA TO REPROCESS SPENT FUEL, THE SPENT-FUEL STORAGE POOLS AT THE TARAPUR PLANT WERE GETTING FILLED BEYOND THEIR DESIGNED CAPACITY. END TEXT.

2. DEPARTMENT REQUESTS ANY INFORMATION EMBASSY MAY HAVE REGARDING ABOVE. CHRISTOPHER

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Message Attributes

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